

MODULE 2

Understanding Trauma

The Impact, the Brain, and the Path to Healing

Trauma isn't something a person just gets over. It changes how the brain and body respond to the world, long after the danger has passed. This module lays the groundwork for everything else in the Presence Works library: what trauma actually does inside a person, and why understanding that changes how you show up for them.

Why This Module Matters

You can't support someone well if you don't understand what's happening inside them. When you know what trauma does to the brain and body, the reactions that seem irrational, the flinching, the shutting down, the anger that comes out of nowhere, start to make sense. That understanding is what keeps you patient instead of frustrated, and present instead of confused.

What You'll Walk Away With

You'll leave able to explain, in plain language, how trauma reshapes the nervous system and why that matters for the people you support. You'll understand the difference between a normal stress response and a nervous system stuck in survival mode. You'll also start to recognize your own responses to hard calls and hard conversations, because this knowledge is for you too, not just for the people you're helping.

What's Inside

Straightforward teaching on the brain and body's response to trauma, written without the jargon that usually comes with this subject. Real examples from the field. Reflection prompts that help the science stick. This module builds the foundation that PRESENCE™ and ATTUNE™ stand on.

PRESENCE™ and ATTUNE™ in Practice

Everything in PRESENCE™ and ATTUNE™ assumes you understand what trauma does to a person. This module is where that understanding gets built, so that later, when you're using PRESENCE™ to

show up for someone or ATTUNE™ to meet them where they are, you know exactly why those movements matter.

A Story You Might Recognize

A firefighter who's usually steady snaps at a rookie over something small, then apologizes and says he doesn't know what came over him. He's not being difficult. His body is still running on the adrenaline from a call three hours earlier, and nobody around him understands that yet, including him.

Who This Is For

Fire and EMS, law enforcement, dispatch, and other public safety personnel. Peer support team members, coordinators, and supervisors. Chaplains and spiritual care providers. Nurses, healthcare workers, educators, and other helping professionals. Anyone who wants to understand the people they serve a little better.

How We Ground This Work

This module draws on trauma informed care and what neuroscience has taught us about stress, memory, and the nervous system. We keep it practical. You don't need a clinical degree to understand this material, and you won't need one to use it.

Scope and Safety

This module is educational. It doesn't authorize diagnosis or treatment, and it isn't a substitute for professional mental health care. If someone you're supporting needs more than education and presence, know how to point them toward it.

Where This Leads

Everything else in the Presence Works Library builds on what you learn here. This is where the foundation gets poured.

Learn the skill. Practice the encounter. Become the presence your people can trust.